

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

ever, joined the coalition.⁴¹ The original number of the Freedom Front members was fourteen. Its membership grew rapidly, reaching twenty-seven by the time of the oil crisis in 1944 and nearly forty in

1945-

By 1944, however, it was clear that the Freedom Front had ceased to be a coalition of various political shades and had become an outright tool of the Tudeh and, consequently, of Soviet policy. At the time of the oil crisis the Freedom Front behaved in a disciplined way, staunchly supporting Soviet demands. The purpose in creating the Freedom Front seemed to be not only to draw a number of newspapers into collaboration with the Communists, but also to create the impression both in Iran and abroad that a broad section of the country's public opinion sided with Russia on many controversial issues. For example, in September, 1945, the Soviet press and the Moscow radio announced that a group of twenty-six Iranian editors had sent a telegram to the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Five Big Powers then deliberating in London, requesting intervention to secure drastic internal reforms and to assure a foreign policy based on friendly relations with the Soviet Union. The editors had denounced the Iranian government as "fascist and reactionary." Characteristic of the role played by the press in Iranian politics during that period was the fact that soon after the release of this news, the Iranian Embassy in London hastened to make an announcement that it had received a cable from "fifty-six genuine editors of the leading daily newspapers" in Iran who had declared that the "Iranians have always been politically progressive people who would be sorry to see any interference in their internal affairs and are in

opposition to any
interference from outside/'⁴³

In August, 1944, the Tudeh held its first national
congress in Te-

4i At one time or another the following papers adhered to the
Freedom Front:
from Teheran—Azadegan, Azhir, Hallaj, Hajat-i-Javid, Damavand,
Razm, Rahbar,
Zaban, Shu'levar, Shahbaz, Zafar, Farman, Kar, Kayfar, Mardom,
Maslahat,
Nejat'i-Iran, Neda-yi-Haqiqat, No Bahar, Darya, Iran-i-Ma, Rah-i-
Nejat; from
Isfahan—Ateshgah, Spenta, Donya-yi-Emruz, Rah-i-Nejat; from
Kermanshah—
Bisutun, Sa'adat-i-Melli; from Ardebil—Jodad; from Tabriz—
Khavar-i-No, Vatan
Yolunda, Setareh-yi-Azerbaijan, Shahin, Adabiyat-i-Sahifeh; from
Meshed—Rasti;
from Resht—Surat, Alborz; from Qum— *Ostavar*; from Shiraz—
^Surwsc.

« *New York Times*, Sept 21, 1945.